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W.M. LLOYD GARRISON, EDITOR.

OUR COUNTRY IS THE WORLD—OUR COUNTRYMEN ARE ALL MANKIND.

NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS!

U.S. CONSTITUTION 'A COVENANT WITH DEATH
AND AN AGREEMENT WITH HELL.'

'Yes! it cannot be denied—the slaveholding
lords of the South prescribed, as a condition of their
assent to the Constitution, three special provisions to
secure the perpetuity of their dominion over their
slaves. The first was the immunity, for twenty years,
of preserving the African slave trade; the second was
the stipulation to surrender fugitive slaves—an en-
gagement explicitly prohibited by the law of God,
delivered from Sinai; and thirdly, the extinction fatal
to the principles of popular representation, of a repre-
sentation for slaves—for articles of merchandise, under
the name of persons. ... Its reciprocal operation
upon the government of the nation is, to establish an
artificial majority in the slave representation over that
of the free people, in the American Congress, and
hereby to make the PRESERVATION, PROPAGA-
TION AND PERPETUATION OF SLAVERY THE
VITAL AND ANIMATING SPIRIT OF THE NA-
TIONAL GOVERNMENT.'—JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

VOL. XX. NO. 12.

BOSTON, MASS., FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1850.

J. B. YERRINGTON & SON, PRINTERS.

WHOLE NO. 1002.

SPEECH
OF THE
HON. JOHN C. CALHOUN,
ON THE SLAVERY QUESTION,
DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
MARCH 4, 1850.

[Concluded.]

calculated to destroy, irretrievably, the equilibrium between the two sections.

These objections equally apply to what, for brevity, I will call the Executive proviso. There is no difference between it and the Wilmot, except in the mode of effecting the object; and in that respect I may say, that the latter is much the least objectionable. It goes to its object openly, boldly, and directly. It claims for Congress unlimited power over the territories, and proposes to assert it over the territories acquired from Mexico, by a positive prohibition of slavery. Not so the Executive proviso. It takes an indirect course, and in order to elude the Wilmot proviso, and thereby avoid encountering the united and determined resistance of the South, it denies by implication, the authority of Congress to legislate for the territories, and claims the right as belonging exclusively to the inhabitants of the territories. But to effect the object of excluding the South, it takes care, in the mean time, of letting in emigrants from the Northern States, and from other quarters, except immigrants from the South, which it takes special care to exclude, by holding up to them the dread of having their slaves liberated under the Mexican laws.

The necessary consequence is, to exclude the South from the territory just as effectually as would the Wilmot proviso. The only difference in this respect is, that what one proposes to effect directly and openly, the other proposes to effect indirectly and covertly.

It cannot, then, be done by eulogies on the Union, or magnifying its nature and character, the great question remains: How can the Union be saved? To save it, that is, by adopting such measures as will do, and that is, by adopting such measures as will not, and by which it can be effected, and that way by which it can be effected, and that way by which it has been proposed. Do that, and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question then is, By what means can this be done? But before I undertake to answer this question, I propose to show by what means can this be done?

Having now, Senators, explained what it is that endangers the Union, and traced it to its cause, and examined its nature and character, the great question remains: How can the Union be saved? To save it, that is, by adopting such measures as will do, and that is, by adopting such measures as will not, and by which it can be effected, and that way by which it has been proposed. Do that, and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question then is, By what means can this be done? But before I undertake to answer this question, I propose to show by what means can this be done?

But the Executive proviso is more objectionable still than the Wilmot, in another and more important particular. The latter, to effect its object, inflicts a dangerous wound upon the Constitution, by depriving the Southern States, as joint partners and owners of the territories, of their rights in them; but it inflicts no greater wound than is absolutely necessary to effect its object. The former, on the contrary, while it inflicts the same wound, inflicts others equally great, and, if possible, greater, as I shall next proceed to explain.

In claiming the right for the inhabitants, instead of Congress, to legislate over the territories, in the Executive proviso, it assumes that the sovereignty over the territories is vested in the former; or, to express it in the language of a resolution offered by one of the Senators from Texas, (General Houston, now absent,) 'they have the same inherent right of self-government as the people in the States.' The assumption is utterly false, unconstitutional, without example, and contrary to the entire practice of the government from its commencement to the present time, as I shall next proceed to show.

The recent movement of individuals in California to form a Constitution and a State government, and to appoint Senators and Representatives, is the first fruit of this monstrous assumption. If the individuals who have made this movement had gone into California as adventurers; and if, as such, they had conquered the territory, and established their independence, the sovereignty of the country would have been vested in them as a separate and independent community. In that case, they would have had a right to form a Constitution, and to establish a government for themselves; and if after that they had thought proper to apply to Congress for admission into the Union, as a sovereign and independent State, it would have been a right, as a sovereign and independent State, for them to do so. But it is evident that they have not done this, nor can they do so, because they are not, and cannot be, sovereign and independent.

Let me then, stand the profession of devotion to the Union by our assailants, when brought to this test? Have they abstained from violating the Constitution? Let the many acts passed by the Northern States to set aside and annul the clause of the Constitution providing for the delivery up of fugitive slaves, answer. I cite this, not that it is the only evidence, in this particular, to what we cannot believe them to be sincere; for if they loved the Union, they would necessarily be devoted to the Constitution. It made the Union, and to destroy the Constitution would be to destroy the Union. But by the only reliable and certain evidence of devotion to the Constitution is, to abstain, on the one hand, from violating it, and to repeat, on the other, all attempts to violate it, until the Constitution can be put in order.

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The assumption is utterly false, unconstitutional, without example, and contrary to the entire practice of the government from its commencement to the present time, as I shall next proceed to show.

Michigan was the first case in which there was any departure from the uniform rule of acting. Here was a very slight departure from established usage. The ordinance of '87 secured to her the right of becoming a State when she should have 60,000 inhabitants.

Owing to some neglect, Congress delayed taking the census. In the meantime, her population increased until it clearly exceeded more than twice the number which entitled her to admission. At this stage, she formed a Constitution and government, and left the country for the first time a census of the two sections: the South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, remove all causes of discontent, and satisfy the South that she could remain honestly and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the question at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

Having now shown what cannot save the Union, I return to the question with which I commenced: How can the Union be saved? There is but one way by which it can, with any certainty, be saved, and that is by a full and final settlement, on the principles of justice, of all the questions at issue between the two sections: the South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, remove all causes of discontent, and satisfy the South that she could remain honestly and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the question at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can do nothing—not even protect itself—but by the stronger. The North has only to will it, to do justice and perform her duty, in order to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory; and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled—to cease the agitation of the slave question, and provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore in the substance the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government.

Whether this can be done, and whether it will be done, is a question which I leave to the South. Sir, I am sorry if they did consider, they would fulfil them with alacrity. Therefore, I repeat, sir, that here is a ground of complaint against the North, which was founded, which ought to be removed, which is a violation of the power of the different departments of this government to remove; which calls for the enactment of proper laws authorizing the judicature of this Government, in the several States, to do all that is necessary for the restoration of them to those who claim them. Wherever I go, and whatever I speak on the subject, when I have opened here, I desire to speak to the whole North—I say that the South has been injured in this respect, and has a right to complain; and the North has been too careless of what I think the Constitution peremptorily and emphatically enjoins upon us.

But will the North agree to this? It is for her to answer this question. But I will say she cannot refuse, if she has half the love for the Union which she professes to have, or without justly exposing herself to the charge that her love of power and aggrandizement is far greater than her love of the Union. At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union is on the North, and not the South. The South cannot save it by any act of hers, and the North may save it without any sacrifice whatever, unless to do justice and to perform her duties under the Constitution regarded by her as a sacrifice.

It belongs now, Senators, for you to decide what you will act in reference to this unprecedented transaction. The Executive has laid the paper purporting to be the Constitution of California before you, and asks you to admit her into the Union as a State, and the question is, will you, or will you not admit her? It is a grave question, and there rests with you a heavy responsibility. Much, very much will depend upon your decision. If you admit her, you endorse and give your sanction to all that has been done.

Are you prepared to do so? Are you prepared to surrender your power of legislation for the territories—a power expressly vested in Congress by the Constitution, as has been fully established?

Can you, consistently with your oath to support the Constitution, surrender it? Are you prepared to admit that the inhabitants of the territories possess the sovereignty over them: and that any number, more or less, may claim any extent of territory they please; may form a Constitution and government, and erect it into a State, without asking your permission? Are you prepared to surrender the sovereignty of the United States over whatever territory may be held after acquired, to the first adventurers who may rush into it? Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department, all the powers which you have heretofore exercised over the territories?

If not, how can you, consistently with your duty, and your oath to support the Constitution, give your assent to the admission of California as a State, under a pretended Constitution and government?

Can you believe that the project of a Constitution which they have adopted has the least validity? Can you believe that there is such a State in reality as the State of California? No; there is no such State.

It has no legal or constitutional existence. It has no validity, and can have none, without your sanction. How, then, can you admit it as a State, when, according to the provisions of the Constitution, your power is limited to admitting new States? That is, you are not to admit it, as a State, existing States, independent of my ability, both in the Union and my section, throughout the whole of this agitation, I shall have the consolation, let what will come, that I am free from all responsibility.

It belongs now, beyond controversy, that the sovereignty over the territories is vested in the United States—that is, in the several States composing the Union, and that the power of legislating over them is expressly vested in Congress, it follows that the individuals in California who have undertaken to form a Constitution and a State, and to exercise the power of legislation, without the consent of Congress, have usurped the sovereignty of the United States and the authority of Congress, and have acted in open defiance of both. In other words, what they have done is revolutionary and rebellious in its character, anarchical in its tendency, and calculated to lead to the most dangerous consequences. Had they acted from premeditation and design, it would have been in fact an actual rebellion, but such is not the case. The blame lies much less upon them than upon those who have induced them to take a course so unconstitutional and dangerous. They have been led into it by language held here, and the course pursued by the executive branch of the government.

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Now, sir, as far as any of these grievances have their foundation in matters of law, they can be redressed, and ought to be redressed; and so far as they have their foundation in matters of opinion, in sentiment, in mutual censurism and recrimination, all that we can do is to endeavor to allay the agitation, and cultivate a better feeling and more fraternal sentiments between the South and the North.

Mr. President, I should much prefer to have heard from every member of this floor declarations of opinion that this Union can never be dissolved, than the declaration of opinion that, in any case, under any pressure of circumstances, such a dissolution was possible. I bear with pain, and anguish, and distress, the word *secession*—especially when it falls from the lips of those who are eminently patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world for their political services. *Secession!* Peaceable *secession*! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country without convolution! The breaking up of the fountains of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish—I beg every body's pardon—as to expect to see any such thing? Sir, he who sees these States, now revolving in harmony around a common centre, and expects to see them quit their places and fly off without convolution, may look the next hour to see the heavenly bodies rush from their spheres, and jostle against each other in the realms of space without producing the crash of the universe. There can be no such thing as a peaceable *secession*. Peaceable *secession* is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live here—covering this whole country—is it to be thawed and melted away by *secession*, as the snows on the mountain melt under the influence of a noon-day sun? disappear almost unnoticed, and die off? No, sir! No, sir! I will not state what might possibly be the disruption of the States; but, sir, I see it as plain as I see the sun in heaven—I see that disunion must produce such a war as I will not describe, in its two-fold character.

Peaceable *secession*!—peaceable *secession*? The concurrent agreement of all the members of this great republic to separate? A voluntary separation, with alimony on one side, and on the other? Why, what would be the result? Where is the line to be drawn? What States are to secede? What is to remain American? What am I to be? An American can no longer? Where is the flag of the republic to remain? Where is the eagle still to tower? or is he to cower and shrink and fall to the ground? Why, sir, our ancestors—our fathers, and our grandfathers, those of them that are yet living amongst us with prolonged lives, would rebuke and reproach us; and our children and our grandchildren would cry out shame upon us, if we of this generation should disown these ensigns of the power of the Government and the harmony of the Union, which is every day felt among us with much joy and gratitude. What is to become of the army? What is to become of the navy? What is to become of the public lands? How is each of the thirty States to defend itself? I know, although the idea has not been stated distinctly, there is to be a Southern Confederacy, perhaps. I do not mean, when I allude to this statement, that any one seriously contemplates such a state of things. I do not mean to say that it is true, but I have heard it suggested elsewhere, that that idea has originated in a design to separate. I am sorry that it has ever been thought of, talked of, or dreamed of in the wildest flights of human imagination. But the idea must be of a separation, including the slave States upon one side, and the free States upon the other. Sir, there is—not—I may express myself too strongly, perhaps—but some things, some moral things, are almost as impossible as other natural or physical things; and I hold the idea of a separation of these States, those that are free to form one government, and those that are slaveholding to form another, as a moral impossibility. We could not separate the States by any such line, if we were to draw it. We could not sit down here to-day, and draw a line of separation that would satisfy any five men in the country. There are natural causes that would keep and tie us together—there are social and domestic relations which we could not break if we would, and which we should not if we could. Sir, nobody can look over the face of this country at the present moment—nobody can see where its population is the most dense and growing, without being ready to admit, and compelled to admit, that ere long America will be in the valley of the Mississippi.

Well, now, sir, I beg to enquire what the wildest enthusiasm has to say on the possibility of cutting off that river, and leaving free States at its source, and the Spanish bayou, let me say to the people of this country that these things are worthy of their pondering and of their consideration. Many, sir, are five millions of freemen in the free States north of the river Ohio; can any body suppose that this population can be severed by a line that divides them from the territory of a foreign and alien government, down somewhere, the Lord knows where, upon the lower banks of the Mississippi? What would become of the slave States? Shall the man from the Yellow Stone and the Platte River be connected in the new Republic with the man who lives on the Southern extremity of the Gulf of Mexico? Sir, I am sorry to pursue this line of argument. I dislike it—I have an utter disgust for it. I would rather hear of natural blights and mildews, war, pestilence, and famine, than to hear gentlemen talk of secession. To break up this great Government—to dismember this great country—to astonish Europe with an act of folly such as two centuries has never beheld in any Government! No, sir; no, sir! There will be no secession. Gentlemen are not serious when they talk of secession.

Sir, I hear there is to be a Convention held at Nashville. I am bound to believe that if worthy gentlemen meet at Nashville in Convention, their object will be to adopt counsels conciliatory—to advise the South to forbearance and moderation, and to inculcate principles of brotherly love and affection, and attachment to the Constitution of the country as it now is. I believe if the Convention meet at all, it will be for this purpose; for certainly if they meet for any purpose hostile to the Union, they have been singularly inappropriate in their selection of a place. I remember, sir, that when the treaty was concluded between France and England at the peace of Amiens, a stern old Englishman and an orator, who disliked the terms of the peace as ignominious to England, said in the House of Commons that if King William could know the terms of that treaty, he would turn his coffin. Let me commend the saying of Mr. Windham in all its emphasis and in all its force, to any person who shall meet at Nashville for the purpose of concerting measures for the overthrow of the Union of this country over the bones of Andrew Jackson.

Sir, I wish to make two remarks, and hasten to a conclusion. I wish to say, in regard to Texas, that it should be hereafter at any time the pleasure of the government of Texas to cede to the United States a portion, larger or smaller, of her territory which lies to the north of the 34° of north latitude, to be formed into free States for a fair equivalent in money or in the payment of her debt. I think it an object well worthy the consideration of Congress; and I shall be happy to concur in it myself, if I should be in the public councils of the country at the time.

I have but one other remark to make. In my observations upon slavery as it has existed in the country, and as it now exists, I have expressed no opinion of the mode of its extinguishment or abolition. I will say, however, though I do have nothing to propose on that subject, because I do not dream myself so competent as other gentlemen to consider it, that if any gentleman from the South shall propose a scheme of colonization, to be carried on by that government upon a large scale for the transportation of free colored people to any colony or any place in the world, I should be quite disposed to incur almost any degree of expense to accomplish that object. Nay, sir, following an example set here more than twenty years ago by a great man, then a Senator from New York, I would return to Virginia—and through her for the benefit of the whole South—the money received from the lands and territories ceded by her to this Government, for any such purpose as to relieve, in whole or in part, or in any way to diminish or deal beneficially with the free colored population of the Southern States. I have said that I honor Virginia for her cession of this territory. There have been received into the treasury of the United States eighty millions, of dollars, the proceeds of the sales of the public lands ceded by Virginia. If the residue should be sold at the same rate, the whole aggregate will exceed two hundred millions of dollars. If Virginia and the South see fit to adopt any proposition to relieve themselves from the free people of color among them, they have my free consent that the Government pay them any sum of money out of its proceeds which may be adequate to the purpose.

And now, Mr. President, I draw these observations to a close. I have spoken freely, and I meant to do so. I have sought to make no display; I have sought to enliven the occasion by no animated discussion; nor have I attempted any train of elaborate argument. I have sought only to speak my sentiments fully and at large, being desirous once and for all to let the Senate know, and to let the country know, the opinions and sentiments which I entertain on all these subjects. These opinions are not likely to be suddenly changed. If there be any future service that I can render to the country consistently with these sentiments and opinions, I shall cheerfully render it. If there be not, I shall still be glad to have had an opportunity to disburden my conscience from the bottom of my heart, and to make known every political sentiment that therein exists.

Mr. Calhoun.—One word, and I have done.

There was concert of action. I have not looked into the ordinance very recently, but my memory tells me thus far, that Mr. Jefferson introduced his first proposition to exclude slavery in 1784. There was a vote taken upon it, and I think on that vote every Southern Senator voted against it; but I am not certain of it. One thing I am certain of, that it was three years before the ordinance could pass. It was steadily resisted to 1787; and when it was passed, as I have good reason to believe, it was upon a principle of compromise; first, that the ordinance should contain a provision similar to the one put in the Constitution with respect to fugitive slaves; and next, that it should be inserted in the Constitution; and this was the compromise upon which the prohibition was inserted in the ordinance of 1787. We thought we had an indemnity in that ordinance, but we made a great mistake. Of what possible advantage has it been to us? Violated faith has met us on every side, and the advantage has been altogether in their favor. Oh the other hand, it has been thrown open to a Northern population, to the entire exclusion of the Southern. This was the leading measure which destroyed the compromise of the Constitution, and then followed the Missouri compromise, which was carried mainly by Northern votes, as now vowed and not respected by them. That was the next step, and between these two causes the equilibrium was disturbed.

Having made these remarks, let me say that I took great pleasure in listening to the declarations of the honorable Senator from Massachusetts upon several points. He put himself upon the fulfillment of the contract of Congress in the resolutions of Texas annexation, for the admission of three or four new States provided by those resolutions to be formed out of the territory of Texas. All that was many, statesmanlike, and calculated to do good, because just. He went further; he condemned, and righteously condemned, and in that he has shown great firmness, the course of the North relative to the stipulations of the Constitution for the restoration of fugitive slaves; but permit me to say, for I desire to be candid upon all subjects, that if the Senator, together with his friends on his side of the chamber, puts his confidence in the bill which has been reported here, to extend the laws of Congress upon this subject, it will prove fallacious. It is impossible to execute any law of Congress until the people of the States shall co-operate.

I hear the gentleman with great pleasure say that he would not vote for the Wilmot proviso, for he regarded such an act unnecessary, considering that Nature had already excluded slavery. As far as the new acquisitions are concerned, I am disposed to leave them to be disposed of as the hand of Nature shall determine. It is what I always have insisted upon. Leave that portion of the country more natural to a non-slaveholding population to be filled by that description of population; and leave that portion into which slavery would naturally go to be filled by a slaveholding population—destroying artificial lines, though perhaps they may be better than none. Mr. Webster spoke like a prophet of the effect of the Missouri compromise line. I am willing to leave it for Nature to settle; and to organise governments for the Territories, giving all free scope to enter and prepare themselves to participate in their privileges. We want, sir, nothing but justice. When the gentleman says that he is willing to leave it to Nature, I understand he is willing to remove all impediments, whether real or imaginary. It is consummate folly to assert that the Mexican law prohibiting slavery in California and New Mexico is in force; and I have always regarded it so.

No man would feel more happy than myself to believe that this Union formed by our ancestors should live forever. Looking back to the long course of forty years' service here, I have the consolation to believe that I have never done one act which would weaken it; that I have done full justice to all sections.

And if I have ever been exposed to the imputation of a contrary motive, it is because I have been willing to defend my section from unconstitutional encroachments. But I cannot agree with the Senator from Massachusetts, that this Union cannot be dissolved. I am to understand him that no degree of oppression, no outrage, no wrong, can break it.

He expresses no opinion as to the mode of the extinction or melioration of slavery; 'tis nothing to propose on that subject'. And this is statesmanship?

Yes, sir, the kind Colorado describes:—There are men who never exert themselves to cure an evil, and seek merely to hold it at arm's length, careful only that things may last out their day.'

The body politic is affected with a sore disease; if allowed to have its way, no one can prophesy the result. But there is hope that, if taken in time, before it has tainted the whole system, and while the nation lies with submissive confidence in the heads of its statesmen-doctors, the strength of a good *constitution* will carry the patient through. The great Doctor has spoken; and what does he say? O! nothing about the patient. He has discovered that the disease is not contagious!—there is no danger of its spreading! But as for the sufferer, he 'has nothing to propose': And then, laying his hand where his heart ought to be, he assures us that he has disburdened it from the very bottom, and told 'every sentient that exists there'. Excellent physician! 'O! how much blacker art thou than thy looks!'

Yes, take slavery as it is, staggered by the sentiment of the civilized world arrayed against it, confined within uneasy limits, uncertain of the result, and the whole of the room, presented me, fearing the whole of his remarks. I have only one or two observations to make; and, to begin, I first notice the honorable Senator's last remark. He asks me if I hold the breaking up of the Union, by any such thing as the voluntary secession of States, as an impossibility. I know, sir, this Union can be broken up; every Government can be, and I admit that there may be such a degree of oppression as will warrant resistance and a forcible separation.

That is revolution. That is rebellion! Of that ultimate fact, it will become itself the great instrument of destruction of producing oppression, outrage, and broken faith. No, sir, the Union can be broken. Great moral causes will break it if they go on, and it can only be preserved by justice, good faith, and a rigid adherence to the Constitution.

Mr. Webster.—Mr. President, a single word in reply to the honorable member from South Carolina. My distance from you, sir, and the crowded nature of the room, prevent me from hearing the whole of his remarks. I have only one or two observations to make; and, to begin, I first notice the honorable Senator's last remark.

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Mr. Webster.—I presume the gentleman refers to the occasions on which these great acquisitions were made to territory on the Southern side.

Why, undoubtedly wise and skillful public men, having an object to accomplish, may take advantage of occasions.

Indian wars are an occasion; a fear of the British government had given encouragement to the abolitionists of the United States, who were represented at the World's Convention. The question of the abolition of slavery was agitated in that Convention. One gentleman stated that Mr. Adams informed him that if the British Government wished to abolish slavery in the United States, they must begin with Texas.

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